[15 cont.]

*1956 been instructed. In another test her teacher called on her to take blood from a sacrificed ram so that she could perform the suitable rites. The initiate took in her hands the gourd vessel holding the blood, and the spirit then immediately descended into her. The apprentice began to tremble convulsively, and the spirit ordered her to throw the blood over the hut, which was done automatically by the girl who thus emerged triumphant in this test.

The training of the initiate in the second case does not differ from that of the first except in one detail. The mother of the future shaman — who also was one herself — took the girl between her legs and massaged her head and her body all over with her hands.

The period of training is decisive for the initiate shaman to learn how to make contact with the spirits, and through them with the world of the supernatural. In spite of the revelation and of the initiate being already possessed by the spirit in a certain way, it is essential that she learn what we might call the external cult, that is, the system of movements, invocations, canticles, handling of the maraca, chewing of tobacco, etc., in order to be able to propitiate the indispensable presence of the protector spirit or spirits. Métraux, referring to this aspect, says the following: "The second type of initiation does not differ from the [16] first except for the intervention of a master who not only instructs the pupil in the technique of the profession, but, above all, prepares him to enter into direct contact with the supernatural. Whether the initiation is effected by the intermediary of a spirit or of an instructor, no candidate for the title of shaman can practice it unless he is assured after a vision of the protection of one or numerous spirits." (13) [Cited in French.]

13. Métraux. Op. cit., I, 206.

*1956 ● 1961 Initiation fiesta. Let us go back to our first story: When the spirit ordered the instructor to suspend the lessons because the initiate was sufficiently trained to be a shaman, it also told her to instruct the girl's family to organize a chicha-maya dance, which would last all that night and the following day and night

[16 cont.]
until dawn. For the dance they must kill sufficient goats for all the dancers to eat, accompanying this food with roasted corn. The men and women who would be taking part in the dance ceremony should come painted with annatto [bija], the women could be single or married. Once the dance had finished, at dawn of the second night, the meat of the sacrificed animals was to be piled on a heap of leaves, and the old shaman would come to "shamanize" [piachar] (14) it, spitting her saliva impregnated

14. We have found it necessary to use the verb "shamanize" [piachar] to refer to the ceremonies which the shaman [piache] performs during his cures and other functions. Purists of the language will please forgive us.

with the manilla she was chewing on the meat; she would also "shamanize" the novice. Until this had been done the meat could not be eaten by the guests. Those present could then take the meat so prepared, but they must go in a direction when they walked away to eat it opposite to the direction taken by the shaman when she came to perform her ritual ceremonies over it. The consumption of this meat by the others would be done in honor of the spirits whom the shaman wanted to propitiate at this time.

Similarly, there is little difference between the external cult of the rite of passage of the second case and the previous one. Once the spirit announced that the initiate knew how to invoke it, a fiesta was organized at its request which lasted for three days. For this celebration they sacrificed 20 sheep and a steer, and they danced the chicha-maya. In addition, they made the already mentioned distribution of chicha and rum to the guests. During these three days of fiesta, the mother -- the shaman in this case -- continued to instruct the initiate in all matters relating to her future duties. At dawn on the third day the novice graduated.

Final period of preparation: Let us continue with the first case. After the dance with all the accompanying ceremonial was

[16 cont.]

*756 over, the young shaman [17] was secluded for two months in her home. She dedicated this period to practicing chewing tobacco, and the act of invoking the spirits, the way of curing the sick, bringing rainfall, "shamanizing," animals, keeping pestilence away, etc. The maraca and the crown (kiara, in Guajiro) were made by her during this seclusion, although they could have been bought or ordered to be made by others. At the end of this two *756 months' seclusion, it was essential, in order to terminate the 787 young shaman's cycle of initiation into shamanism, to prepare 796 ten containers of corn chicha and to invite many Indians from different sections to be present at the true graduation of the initiate. That night, while the others danced and drank, the young shaman remained practicing her arts. It is common on these occasions for the spirit to approach the aspiring shaman and say, for example: "Go look for an animal of such-and-such characteristics (it describes the desired animal minutely in all its details) and kill it. If you disobey me you will faint, have an attack, and you will never become a shaman." The young initiate then passes on the order to her relatives, who must hasten to look for the animal described by the spirit and sacrifice it. When the celebration has ended, the spirit returns to tell the [301 young girl: "Hang up ten necklaces in your room so that I may 426] come down and help you." (These necklaces must be made of gold beads). The aspiring shaman acquires these necklaces with the help of her relatives and friends, even on loan, and hangs [782] them in her room so that she can "shamanize." The spirit, grateful for her ready obedience and for the offering, approaches her once again and says: "Now you will make a truly good [834] shaman." And it warns her: "Now you may not sleep (cohabit) with your husband."

*756 Exercising the profession. When all these rites and cere-787 monies preparatory to entering the way of life of the shaman have been complied with, the person chosen, as his protector spirit affirms, may then dedicate himself to that calling. The spirit itself has conferred such power. Better still, it has descended into the novice; it has entered his body to accompany him in every professional act, to communicate the arts indispensable or

[21cont.]

755 796 When the patient shows signs of improving, a fiesta is organized consisting of chicha-maya dances and feasting. For this event they prepare in advance all that will be offered to the participants; chicha made from chewed corn, plain or sweetened with panela according to the economic situation of the sick man's family. The dance lasts one or more days and nights, as ordered [534] by the shaman, the only musical instrument used being the drum. In order to end the fiesta, two or three steers and several goats and sheep are killed if the hosts are rich. At four or five o'clock in the morning, according to the shaman's wishes, the sick person is taken from his bed, and the curer himself bathes him with [515] soap and water, after which he is again carried indoors and is permitted to stay up, but not to leave his dwelling. Slowly he resumes normal living and the everyday diet. If the patient should have a relapse, [22] the treatment is repeated. The process of these cures may last up to two months, according to the patient's condition.

No one is actually invited to the fiesta which is organized [574] by order of the shaman when he has succeeded in curing a patient. When people find out that such a fiesta is about to be given from the characteristic beating of the drum, they approach without being invited and take part, joining in dancing [273] the chich-amaya. The women are offered a bowl of chicha made from chewed corn to take to their homes to drink there with their families. Men are given rum or chicha. The women wear with 291 great pride their long ample robes, which cover them to the 755 ankles, their waireñas, or leather sandals with toe pieces made 796 of knitted wool and adorned with large tassels of the same ma- 556 terial, and a pañuelo around their heads, the corners of which hang down their backs. If they are wealthy enough, they complete their personal adornment with anklets and bracelets of coral and necklaces of gold or tuma. The men also wear their finest robes, which, hanging from one of their shoulders, cover the upper part of their bodies. This is complemented by a wide sash used to support the loincloth [guayuco], wider than 755 the one commonly used, that is, than that used in their daily 796 work. If animals are sacrificed — which depends on the wealth

[22 cont.]
of the patient or of his family — then those attending are presented with a good portion of meat.

Shamanistic treatment of animals. When pestilence breaks out among a Guajiro Indian's animals, he has no other known recourse to repel it than to seek the services of a shaman. As he already knows in a way the accustomed ceremonial in such cases, he prepares days beforehand a sufficient quantity of corn chicha, which is used in the chicha-maya dances, and he invites a large group of women to come to the dance. He then calls in the shaman, who, once arrived on the scene, has all the animals collected and enclosed in a large corral. While this operation is being carried out, the shaman begins to prepare himself for the ceremony, inviting his protector spirit to cast out the pestilence, and dressing himself (or better said, undressing himself) in a neighboring hut as is customary for the ceremony of the cure of human beings, keeping on his loincloth if he is a man and her dress if a woman. He then places a crown of wool on his head and readies the maraca, which he keeps in his hand during the entire event. Following this, he enters the place where the animals are, goes in among them, and turns himself around in circles about them, continually shaking the maraca and spitting on their bodies the juice from the manilla he is continually chewing. During all this time, he intones his ritual invocatory chants, [23] which are different from those used for the cure of humans, and he never stops shaking the maraca. This operation generally lasts for several days and is only suspended for those moments when the shaman rests. When he considers that the evil spirits which have caused the pestilence have been successfully driven off, he suspends his activities and orders for the fiesta to begin, which is started by the sacrifice of an animal, the distribution of chicha to those present, and the dance. The animals are driven to the fields while numerous gunshots are fired (in older times arrows were shot off). These are intended to complete the work of the shaman in driving off the evil spirits of the disease.

Shamans' dreams. When a shaman dreams of a long trip through unknown territory, it is an evident sign that he is due to die. When the dream is over, he attempts through "shamanizing"

[121 cont.]

differentiation between magic and religion, and between play as such and drama. But these four things are so interlaced that it is not possible to take each one of these aspects separately for analysis or even for presentation. If the whole appears clear we shall be satisfied. Our intention in this study has been to present facts in the most objective manner possible without neglecting, obviously, to interpret at times when it has seemed necessary or when we have felt capable of doing so.

As we have said, whether what is presented in the Dance of the Kid is magic or religion, it is a matter that might lend itself to Byzantine discussions by which nothing of the subject would be cleared up. On the contrary, they would further confuse it and take away opportunities to make known one of the most interesting aspects of the spiritual life of the Guajiro, in which are broken many of their social traditions, or rather their everyday cultural patterns, and in which they have an opportunity to show their dexterity more than their capacity as actors, since it must not be thought that what we have described as theater is such in the true sense of the word but rather corresponds to the beginnings of that art, the beginning of representations, without finality in themselves but as propitiation of rain and good harvests, as integral parts of a complete ritual which includes dances, songs, and representations of natural scenes or incidents taken from mythology.

What has given us occasion to call this theater or, if one prefers, drama is the concurrence in the representation of scenes of a small number of the participants at the Fiesta, or Dance, of the Kid and the presence of a great number of the other participants who fill the role of spectators. [122]

It also frequently occurs that each group that takes part in the play is headed by a minstrel, or singer, who narrates each event as it occurs; the language he employs is dramatic, and he uses the most attractive turns of speech. The verbal music is added to the drama though not in the form of massed choirs but is expressed by each of the leaders who guide the actions of the participants in the scene that is being represented. Unfortunately, these songs have not been traditionally preserved but are rather improvised for the occasion. Only the music has endured

[122 cont.]

536 796 unchanged, composed by some Indian, namely by an inhabitant from the Jarara district — which is the cradle of their poetry and their music, according to the statements of these same natives. They adapt the verbal part of the play to this music as the representation progresses.

The Dance of the Kid is celebrated when the rains arrive, when the ahuyamas, the watermelons, and the kidney beans are growing. It is practically a ceremonial rite by which they celebrate the beginning of the rains and the appearance of fruit. At this dance, which is celebrated at night and during consecutive weeks and even months, whoever wishes to do so joins in, since the invitation consists of the beat of the drum, a characteristic of these occasions.

535 796 There are two special dances which are performed in the following way: In the first, each Indian moves united with a female partner, in line one behind the other, and holding each other by the waist, they walk in the direction taken by the leading couple. The song which may go like this begins: "Lend me your partner so I may travel with her." They then make a turn. On doing this, the first Indian takes the partner of the second, and so on successively down the line. The dance continues with these turns and progresses forward until the first pair are reunited.

In the other dance each man takes a partner, an unmarried woman as a general rule. They take hold of hands, doing the same with the other couples that join in the dance. Once hands are grasped, they all walk in line but neither forward nor backward but to right and left. Then, hands still grasped, they run in circles, having the first in the line as the axis, until they fall to the ground impelled by the speed their racing around has given them; then they rise and start the dance over again.

796 The dance begins at about six in the afternoon and lasts until midnight. At this hour all the participants return to their homes but come back again on the following and every succeeding night until the cycle of the beginning of the rains, the collecting of the crops, or the ripening of the fruit has been fulfilled. [123]

The ceremony we have been describing has three special

[123 cont.]

796 aspects: 1) it shows ability in theatrical representations; 2) dancing, such as we have described in previous paragraphs, accompanied by songs; 3) a very interesting sexual aspect, in which the cultural patterns which govern Guajiro society are [786] broken, permitting the possibility of a certain sexual freedom without the consequences attached to such in normal times. We will begin with this last aspect, leaving for later a discussion of what their songs, plays, or drama really are.

Sexual aspect. a) The man, when the moment for dancing 796 arrives, takes a partner who usually accompanies him on every 786 evening of the dance. When they end by liking each other, as a result of dancing together, the couples leave the dancing group and withdraw to the forest to satisfy their sexual desires.

In normal times in the community this act would lead to 684 outbreaks of fighting in which the clans of the two participants 628 would clash. The man would be summoned and would be under an obligation to pay a large sum for the harm done and a further sum for the dangers and pains of childbirth in case of pregnancy; or he would find himself obliged to buy the woman for wife in reparation for the fault he had committed. In case he failed to comply with one of these requirements, vengeance and war would follow. But none of this happens during this time of fiesta. 796 If a man who has been with a woman during these nights of 786 dancing (which can go on for three or four months) cares to take her as his wife, he must pay for her the price arranged with her relatives, but if he does not want to do this, his total obligation [431] is limited to a present of a robe. She on her part will give him a similar gift or simply a belt for his loincloth. Afterward they do not meet each other except on casual occasions.

Furthermore, if, owing to intimacies during the dance between unmarried couples, a child should be born, the father has [846] no responsibility toward it or to the girl's relatives. The child is accepted by the girl's family; it is not looked down on, and it participates under conditions of equality with the legitimate heirs in all the duties and rights of the other members of the family group.

[123 cont.]

796 533 539 b) Of the songs which are sung in this ceremony of propitiation of rain, there are some of a simple, humorous character making fun of neighboring native groups, pointing out their defects, such as we transcribe below: [124]

I do not love the men of Ríohacha
Because they like to smoke tobacco;
I do not like the men of Nazaret,
Because they have a very sweet tooth.

[131] But there are others of a typical erotic flavor, sung by the men, which are nothing more than an invitation to love, the story of their manliness, of their value as males. We translate literally a fragment which we heard in Uribía:

Come to me, my sister.
Come to me, my woman.
I am a male.

Do not look at him
—At that youngster —
Walk straight and correctly.
Walk straight and correctly.
Walk straight and correctly.

I am here.
I am the male.
I bring with me my rifle
And my revolver.
I am a male.
You were very charming, my love.

Oh, that I may take an Indian girl!
I will pay for her
Because I am rich.

Many songs such as this are sung at the Dance of the Kid, but we were unable to take down the words because, as we have said, songs do not exist as such. They are not stereotyped and established with definite words and unchangeable form but are improvised, making use of every recourse, especially stories of past incidents, to which they adapt a well-known tune.

[124 cont.]

585 c) There is another very important fact in this sexual aspect of the fiesta that we are describing, which is what we might call proof of virginity. [125]

Virginity in woman is highly valued by the natives in spite of the fact that at the present time, due to economic acculturative factors, it is increasingly difficult to find virgins among marriageable women, a state of affairs that the Indian male is well aware of. But it is always a matter of pride and something to be boasted of for a Guajiro man to find on his marriage night that his bride is a virgin. It is the custom, furthermore, that if the man marries not knowing that his wife has lost her virginity and has the consequent disillusion on his wedding night, the bride's relatives have to return a part of the livestock which the man paid for her, especially the family necklace. The Indian's concern about this matter, which remains hidden when he is in a normal state, comes to the surface during his drunken bouts, when he will sing about his wife, extolling her and boasting of having had a virgin in his marriage hammock, or insulting and degrading her in coarse improvisations when he considers that he has been defrauded.

524 796 831 This attitude toward sex on the part of the native, or better said this value he places on the virginity of his future wives, is expressed in a sort of game which is played at the Dance of the Kid. To play it, the girls gather in a group about a singer who sings such a song as this: "Let us see, my pretty miss, if you are a virgin, if truly you have not run around too freely, if no young male has put his hands on your body." He then passes his hands over each girl's body, tickling her. He starts at her big toe and goes upward, touching her instep, calves, knees, thighs, genitals, hips, stomach, torso, breasts, armpits, and continues up her neck until he reaches the top of her head. The girl who remains quiet, indifferent, without laughing and without even a smile wins the test and is declared a virgin. The singer then sings again: "You are indeed a virgin, my lovely majayura...," and chants a veritable song of flattery and finishes by escorting her to a set place. He then continues with the rest of the girls gathered there, repeating the same routine. When a girl moves or laughs,

[125 cont.]

524 the singer says to her: "You are not a virgin, I would never
796 have believed this of you, but it is true. A pity, my pretty
831 majayura, that you have not your virginity and that men have had their bodies over yours." He than places her in a place separate from the virgins. When he finishes doing this with all the girls in the group, he distributes prizes to the virgins, to
[431] those who have triumphed in the trial, and he eulogizes them again. The girls later return the presents which are only simulated gifts.

114 The French writer Roger Callois has interpreted these fiestas carried out from ancient to present times in a chapter called [126] "La transgresión sagrada. Teoría de la Fiesta" [The Sacred Sin. Theory of the Fiesta], and he says in this respect: "To their normal way of life, occupied with their daily work, peaceful, surrounded by a system of prudent prohibitions where the maxim quieta non movere maintains law and order in their world, there is opposed the effervescence of the fiesta. This, if only its external aspects are considered, shows identical reactions at every civilized level. It implies a great number of excited, noisy people. These conglomerations of masses greatly influence the starting of and the contagion of an exultation which spends itself in shouts and gestures and encourages the uncontrolled abandonment of all to the most irresponsible impulses. Even today when without doubt the now impoverished fiestas have very little effect on the greyish background of the monotonous everyday life of the people and appear to be sporadic, spread out, almost stagnated, there may still be distinguished in their celebrations some miserable vestiges of the collective abandonment which characterized these ancient riotous celebrations." And later he states: "In the so-called primitive civilizations the contrast is very much more clearly marked. The fiesta lasts several weeks, even several months, interrupted by intervals of rest of from four to five days. At times it required several years to gather together the quantity of comestibles and delicacies which would be not only consumed or despatched ostentatiously but also destroyed and wasted purely and simply because waste and destruction are forms of excess

[127 cont.]
representation of the re-creation of the universe, the resurgence of nature that changes and disappears, to reappear later.

In large part, this could explain the whole of the fiesta. In reality what in La Guajira is being celebrated under the name of the Dance of the Kid is nothing but a true re-creation of the world of the natives of those barren plains. With the arrival of the rains the sea of sand is converted into a green world, the dry beds of the streams become powerful streams of water, the dry brushwood is transformed into green forest, anxiety over thirst disappears, fatigue from sun and desert is changed to rest, hunger to abundance, and worry to hope in the ripening of fruits and the disappearance of the specter of poverty which prowls the sierras and the plains. It is Mareiwa, their divinity, their good spirit, who has made his apparition over the lakes of the Sierra de Nevada, unleashing storms and hurricanes and bringing the promised rains to his creatures.

But, on the other hand, the sexual acts we have just shown to be present at this traditional fiesta of La Guajira should be treated apart as they represent a transgression of the established rigid and severe cultural patterns that refer to carnal relations between men and women. As the general interpretation of the whole of the Guajiro community has not yet been finished, which could give us sufficient data to carry out necessary clarifications, we shall have to limit ourselves to noting certain outstanding facts.

Unmarried men and women in La Guajira, when looked at in its normal state, are subject to rigorous restrictions in their sex life. Sexual intercourse before marriage is not allowed to their women as the men want their spouses to be virgin. The bachelor is limited in the satisfaction of his sexual impulses by the law of compensation payment, which forces him in the case of his having relations with an unmarried girl to pay a heavy indemnity by which is covered the harm done to the woman, the offense [128] to her relatives, and the possible pains and dangers of childbirth when pregnancy occurs. And if these impositions are not complied with or if the Indian does not marry the girl, paying the price her relatives demand, revenge and declaration

[128 cont.]
of war to the death will result between the clans affected.

One has to take into account the fact that a woman who has been bought for wife is relatively valuable, and the native is not always in a position to accumulate the number of animals sufficient to pay for her, although it is considered an obligation on the part of his relatives to assist him when the time for his marriage arrives. As prostitution is so limited because of the condition of inferiority in which it places the woman who traffics in sex, the situation of the unmarried male in this respect is difficult. We repeat again that we make this statement on the basis of the facts of La Guajira social customs in normal times, and not on the basis of the present period when they are suffering from ever increasing problems of hunger, poverty, and acculturation, phenomena which are overthrowing all their traditional institutions.

Presenting the question in these terms, one can appreciate the trying position of the bachelor Guajiro native who is without slaves and without economic resources to enable him to buy a wife. He lives within a regimen of limitations and restrictions which reach even to sexual taboos which can be divided into two classes: special cases, especially applicable to the sex life of shamans, as we have seen; and general cases, applicable to the whole community and which go to the extreme of provoking curious euphemisms in the language when the word for the genital organ is phonetically similar to some other word, as in the case with the word for dog.

These restrictions must be considered in the totality of the social norms, but this is not the moment to expound on them as they will be fully covered in this review as an interpretation of the whole of Guajiro society. However, we wish to point out their presence in the Dance of the Kid, or better said their absence, since, as we have said, these restrictions disappear, and there is complete sexual freedom which permits the minstrel to caress the young maids on the pretext of deciding their virginity or loss of it, a thing that in normal times would not be permitted, and to go to the extreme of countenancing carnal union without economic or social consequences, the only

[128 cont.]

requirement being the girl's consent; and she, in spite of the loss of her virginity, in spite of her illegal maternity, does not descend in status nor bring into her community a new being inferior in standing in any way to the others. [129]

This in large part explains the large attendance of youths of both sexes at the ceremony of the Dance of the Kid, which pleases the patron who sponsors the rite because it gives a greater solemnity to the rite and in that way aids in the propitiation of the rains, and, in consequence, the harvests will be of good quality and more abundant.

d) A proof that these ceremonies break away from the sexual order established in the community is the frequent representation of the sexual act of animals combined with other dramatizations which we shall study later. Here are some examples.

The hawksbill turtle. Participants arrange themselves in a long line, or chain, firmly clasping each others' waists. They symbolize in this manner the sexual act of the hawksbill turtle. This line belongs to one singer who says in his song that his turtles are performing their sexual act as they are in heat. Another band is also headed by its singer. Their role consists in trying to separate the turtles, by tugging, each one separately, at the chain made by the turtles. The turtle that is separated from its team is taken over as a trophy by the other team, but if this group is unable to pull them away it loses the match. The activity lasts until all the turtles of the chain have been separated from their team or until the opposite band that is attempting to do this declares itself beaten.

The kid. This game is played on a cleared field. A group of Indians holding each others' hands form a circle, making believe it is a corral in which female goats are kept at night. Outside the corral are the male goats represented by other Indians who, in full view of the animals enclosed, march round the corral and make successive attempts to enter. The Indians who represent the fence fend them off but finally one or two males are able to force their way in. Once inside, they imitate and copy all the attitudes of the male when aroused; they chase the females, pursue and smell them, and end by simulating the sexual act. At

[129 cont.]

526 this moment the owner of the goats arrives to look over his flock,
535 and he states in his song that none of his animals are missing,
796 they are fat because pasture is fresh and abundant, and he an-
831 nounces that he is about to mark them. He starts by taking out
[422] each female goat one by one and pretends to cut its ear, which is the way to mark such animals. He keeps up his song, referring to what he is doing. "I have many goats and now I shall lack neither meat nor milk; I am rich...."

e) We would add to the above the fact that Indian girls of
[554] the wealthy class do not take part in these gatherings, or they
796 do so on very rare occasions, as their prestige [130] would
786 diminish seriously in consequence of the opinion held of the fiesta that only those girls go to it who want to get a husband readily or to satisfy their sexual urges. Besides, it is the obligation of each man to flirt with or treat with familiarity the girl who becomes his partner in the dance, and her obligation is to supply him during the dance with roasted corn, bread, meat, chicha, etc.

Summarizing up to this point, we can state that the Dance of the Kid is a festival in which the Guajiro Indians seek to propitiate the rains at the same time that it celebrates their arrival and fecundity: fecundity in fruits; fecundity in animals, as dramatized in the ceremonies just described; and fecundity among men, in human beings, who are free from the restrictions which are imposed on them by the community in ordinary daily life to maintain social order.

* * *

536 Theatrical representations. "Drama is particularly difficult to classify because so often it gets mixed up with religion.... On the other hand, dramatic scenes can be executed for collective entertainment or as farces with no special pretentions, as for example in a Tahitian pantomime which represents the theft of a basket of food from a sleeping servant; although it can occur, on occasion, that these simple and uncertain experiments develop into real dramas." (65)

65. Lowie. Antropología Cultural [Cultural Anthropology], XI, 194-195.

[130 cont.]

536 796 Lowie's words, which we have just quoted, serve us well for what we have wished to call theatrical representations in La Guajira, as these also are but simple farces in which they seek to represent some act in the life of the community, in their mythology, or from scenes from the natural life surrounding them, in the midst of the ceremonies that are organized to celebrate the arrival of the rains, the propitiation of these, and the ripening of the fruits [of the soil]. Naturally, as we stated at the beginning, this ceremony is an inseparable whole up to a certain point, a totality in which the most trivial diversions, such as these unimportant representations and some games, are mixed with outstandingly important actions such as the transgression of social patterns in the satisfaction of sexual impulses, which we have just described and analyzed and in which the organization norms are utterly discarded, tradition is broken, and they give free rein to wantonness and [131] pleasure. It is above all a rite. But as Lowie himself affirms: "It is frequent that these important rituals present dramatic elements, because of which it was sometimes believed that a ceremony was nothing more than a dramatized myth. Now we know that when myth and ritual are found associated, most frequently the former has been added later, whether or not it be more ancient.... In short, the ceremonial of primitives at times is something more than pomp, and it can raise itself to the height of a true theatrical representation." (66)

66. Lowie. Op. cit., XVII, 310.

796 841 It is curious, nevertheless, that in the celebration of this fiesta dedicated to the propitiation of the rains, nothing related to the myths about them is to be found. Representations of fecundity abound in many of its aspects, as we have just seen in the description of the sexual aspect. But there is no representation related to the rains, at any rate none known to us, unless it be one where the devil and a cloud intervene, or the devil and smoke, as the word to designate the two concepts — cloud and smoke — is the same in Guajiro, sirûma. In this dramatization, which we shall describe later, the cloud triumphs over the devil. It could be interpreted as the triumph of the rains over the long

[131 cont.]

796 821 summer and over sicknesses, pestilences, and deaths which occur as a consequence of it. But we have no work to sustain this affirmation. Also one must take into account the fact that the [609] natives are not willing that strangers be present at their Fiesta of the Kid; and when they are, the play is much repressed in its natural expression and becomes a pale copy, artificial, almost we might say a special product for exportation. Missionaries [797] have contributed greatly to this since they are opposed to the fiesta, considering it amoral or immoral because of the sexual freedom which is shown during its performance and the representation of natural scenes of the procreative life of animals. All the [114 127] data that we have are not the product of our own personal observation of the fiesta but are reports collected from different sources in diverse parts of La Guajira. They have, at the very least, the value of data verified several times over.

All this leads us to think that even though the Dance of the Kid is directly related to the rains since it always starts when the rains begin even though it is specially dedicated to Mareiwa, the divinity of the rains, as we shall prove in the coming chapter, even though its name [132] appears to be derived from the stellar constellation of the Seven Kids, iwa, whose association with rain we shall also note in the following chapter, it is primarily a ceremony dedicated to fecundity, fecundity of the soil shown by the sprouting of plant life brought about by the rains. Fecundity and rain are seen, then, as two inseparable factors, two terms in the same equation: life.

526 796 We spoke of the aspect of demonstration of ability in theatrical representations when we delimited the areas of study of the ceremonial of the Kid. In effect, according to narrations we have at our disposal about the representative games, which we shall describe in detail in the latter part of this chapter, at the end of each one, out of the two sides which have taken part in the development, one side is seen to triumph over the other due to its greater skill or ability in movement or to the physical strength of those taking part when it is a matter of representations of struggles, as we saw in the game of the hawksbill turtle, and as we shall see in the representation of scenes introducing animals,

526 796 [132 cont.]
men and animals, or men alone, as in the description of a putchi, or interclan war. This demonstration of skill and ability
535 796 in their plays is shown very clearly in the chicha-maya dance, which will be fully detailed in the descriptive aspect of Guajiro culture shortly to be published. This dance, in general terms, is restricted to a veritable struggle between the man and the woman who are partners, a struggle in which the woman endeavors to overthrow the man.

536 796 However, in the plays of a mythical nature the scene is more limited and always ends in the same way. It is static in the sense that its conclusion cannot be changed by the ability of the players but is determined by a prearranged plot, rigidly imposed for each occasion it is played. This we believe is what gives it its true mythical nature. It is part of the oral tradition of the group, and for this reason it cannot be subject to variations determined by the moment.

Having made these general statements about their theatrical plays, or dramas, we will now describe them one by one, showing first those that refer to social life, then those relative to the mythical aspect, and finally those in which animals only, or animals with men, appear.

1. Visit between Upper and Lower La Guajira. Two groups take part in this play, each composed of men and women. The first represents Upper La Guajira, the other, Lower La Guajira. The groups line up in two parallel rows [133] spaced a cuadra apart. The components of each group hold each other round the waist, face to face, with a small space between them. The
536 singer who heads the team of Indians that represents Upper La
539 Guajira begins by addressing the visitors from Lower Guajira,
796 "Ansh piá (Have you arrived?)." "Aaa (Yes)," replies the other. "Kasáchicki (What's new?)," asks the first singer. "Nohots (Nothing new)," replies his opposite number from the south country. Again he of the north asks, "How goes the winter? Have the expected rains finally arrived?" The other answers, "we are well content. The rains have come so our crops are in good condition. We have collected food in plenty, and there is still a quantity left to collect. The pastures, like the trees, are green again; our herds have water to satisfy their thirst in the wells and water

[133 cont.]
536 holes. They are fat and have increased. We are neither short of
539 meat nor milk nor fruit...." He from the north then speaks,
796 saying, "I, my friend, am full of woe. I suffer from anxiety, fearing hunger this coming winter. My herds died of thirst beside the dry wells. I have no other food than the fruit of the cardon and the prickly pear. I have to travel long and painful distances so that my hungry herds can find pasture and water. The summer is cruel. The sun burnt the seedlings and the grass." He of the south again intervenes, this time to invite his friend in these or similar words, "Seeing things are thus with you, my brother, why not come with us to our country, to Lower La Guajira. There you will find green pastures and overflowing water holes for your herds. Come with your wife and nephews [and nieces, sobrinos] because there will be food for you all. There the winter is good; we shall expect you."

Finally the one from Upper La Guajira says "Yes, I will go with you. I will leave here with my starving herds and with my people who are in dire need and poverty...." After this the two groups unite, embrace each other at the waist, and walk off together in the direction of Lower La Guajira. So ends the play.

2. Interclan war. As in the previous case, two teams are formed headed by their singing leaders, but this time women do not take part directly. The play starts when a player of one of the teams walks up to the other and pretends to kill one of its members. The latter acts as if he were wounded, twists and squirms on the ground, then dies. The assailant leaves him lying there and flees to his own group and hides himself. The singer then starts up his song, stating that the cause of the killing was jealousy because the victim was attempting to make love to the killer's wife, or he was the lucky rival in winning a girl they were both courting. The other team sees the death of their member and hastens [134] to pick him up. They make grand gestures of fury and demand vengeance, and the singer of this group expresses the rage of his clan; he threatens the opposite group whom he accuses in insulting language and ends by declaring his bitter enmity. Shortly afterward comes the scene of the compensation payment negotiations in which the arbitrator of the murdered man's clan visits the aggressor group to demand payment for the

[134 cont.]

536 539 796 offense received, asking for a very large sum, stating how passionately angry his clan is and warning them that if the sum demanded is not met war will be the inevitable consequence. The singer continues: "Pay for my nephew because you have spilled his blood and by that you have caused us great sorrow. I ask in a kindly manner that you do so unless you want to bring upon yourselves our hatred, if you do not want us to kill your nephews and despoil your people of their herds, to fill up your wells and burn down the homes of your relatives. If our just claim is not met we will carry off your women, your children and nephews and nieces as slaves. Pay!"

The aggressor band collects a number of children -- who are to represent cattle -- necklaces, etc., and hand these over to the contendors. But their singer states that it is too little, that his clan demands more. He orders the other clan to take back their offering and states that as they have not complied with the stipulations of their agreement that they must prepare to pay their debt with their own blood. War is declared. Each band concentrates on arming itself; they collect young cardons which they split in strips to serve as weapons.

The singer of the murdered man's clan again sings: "Get ready, my sons and nephews. We are about to attack our enemies, to collect for the blood of our brother as they have not paid us what they owe. But do not thoughtlessly expose yourselves. Be careful. Attack, but keep well protected behind trees and cardons. Take careful aim. Do not let yourselves be beaten, or we in future will be called cowards and will not be respected. No one then will pay us for our women, and we shall be despised by all. In all La Guajira they will know the story of our defeat, which will be converted into mockery and contempt."

The leader of the group to which the killer belongs sings: "My nephews, be prepared. Very soon these people will arrive to attack us, so be ready for war. Do not be neglectful even for one minute because they will arrive suddenly with the intention of burning our homes, of stealing our herds, destroying our sources of water, and taking our women and children for slaves. Fight and aim well. We shall destroy them."

[134 cont.]

536 539 796 After the leaders of each group have sung these harangues, which are characteristic of those delivered by the chiefs in war, the attack comes. Those who engage in the combat pretend to leave at dawn (all this the leader refers to in his song) in order to fall suddenly on their enemies. With the piles of cardons they shoot at each other. The defenders run away, leaving the field covered [135] with the dead. In the combat they will incite each other. On throwing the cardon they imitate the noise of the explosion and the whistle of the bullets when fired. Each one seeks shelter where he can find it and dodges blows. Those that are touched by thrown missiles fall, screaming that they are wounded, and pretend to die. The chiefs harangue their men: "Shoot well my nephews or else they will think we are cowards."

536 796 When all the projectiles are used up, each band gathers its bodies. The one with the most casualities has lost the battle. At this moment the women come on the scene to mourn the dead of their clan. They cover their faces with pañuelos and, kneeling over a corpse, they cry pitifully. Then they go to bury their dead, and so ends the representation of the putchi.

3. The devil and the Indians. In this dramatization a male Indian covers himself with a black robe, imitating the devil, or yoruja. The devil appears walking in the fields, and an Indian steps out to meet him. The devil with great expertness grips him by the nostrils with his thumb and first finger and throws him to the ground. The Indian is killed. This scene in which the devil always participates but each time with different Indians is repeated three times with the same result, until in the end all the Indians who act in the play unite against the devil and kill him. The devil disappears, but after a short interval he returns to the scene. A new struggle starts up, but this time the devil wins because he kills all the Indians, men and women, who take part in the fight. Later he withdraws and takes off the robe, thus ending the play.

4. The devil and the cloud. The Indians take off their robes and make a kind of tent with them into which they all go. This tent is meant to represent smoke or a cloud. Inside, the Indians

[135 cont.]

536 796 pretend to be eating and playing tranquilly. The devil, another Indian, taking advantage of the carelessness of the men who are occupied with their fun, and covered as always with his black robe, enters the cloud to do them evil. Immediately a fight starts up between the Indians and the devil. In the end the cloud traps the devil and emerges triumphant in the play.

5. The horse race. Horse racing is the sport or trial of 541 536 796 prowess most practiced in the ordinary life of the Guajiro. In this sport they try to bring to the fore the name of the horse and the skill of the jockey. In all the large fiestas a number of horse races are always staged, and such is their enthusiasm for them [538] that they are frequently mentioned in some stories told by the natives. [136]

536 539 796 During the Fiesta of the Kid two groups are formed which, as in the previous cases, are under the direction of their respective leaders. Each group has assigned to it an equal number of men, representing so many race horses. The race course having been previously marked out with its starting point and finishing post, one of the singers begins by referring to the goodness of his horse, praising its speediness. The other replies in an identical tone, using eulogistic concepts regarding his animal. They soon arrange a match which they put into practice. One of them says: "There goes my roan horse; he is swifter than the clouds and the wind and braver than any other in La Guajira." The other sings: "This is my chestnut horse. I am sure that he will win because he is swifter than the deer." They start off their horses and run the race. Following them, race another pair, then another, until all the competitors have taken part.

825 241 536 796 The bees and the fruit thieves. There is a kind of small bee in the peninsula which the Indians call wáya. These bees make their nests in trees or in hollow tree trunks. If a blow is struck near the hive, the bees swarm out, attacking and getting into the hair of anybody standing nearby. They get inside the intruders' clothes and swarm all over them, crawling over their bodies, buzzing angrily, bothering their enemies until they are in a state of desperation. The Indians have a habit of collecting 536 796 hives of these bees and placing them at the entrance to their fields, making use of the bees to defend their harvest from thieves.

[136 cont.]

536 In the scene two groups appear: one representing the bees in the
796 hive; the other, the thieves who want to steal the crops of the
● field. The bee group is placed at the entrance to the field, arranged in compact form to look like the hives. The robbers begin to arrive and try to enter the field to steal the ripe fruit, but in the attempt they brush against the hives. The bees swarm out, buzzing and attacking the thieves, who decamp pursued by the bees. These punish the men to the best of their ability and thus prevent the harvest being stolen.

7. Hunting the jirijir. The natives know a small bird
223 called jirijir that appears in La Guajira during harvest time and devours the products of the fields. The Indians hunt them assidu-
[962] ously in order to defend their crops as well as to use them for food, since they are fat and pleasant tasting. The method they use to catch them is as follows. This small bird generally always flies in a straight line, entering invariably at some determined point and leaving by another in a precise manner. The Indian takes advantage of this [137] observation; hence when he goes to his crops at the times these birds are settling, he provides himself with hammocks or large nets. He places his hammocks at the point where the birds will fly out and then waits their arrival. He frightens them and immediately with great rapidity covers their point of exit, and the birds are trapped in the net, falling into it by the hundreds.

536 This scene is represented in the ceremony that we are
796 describing. At the beginning, various Indians who will act as the hammocks, that is, as those who will attempt to trap the birds in their nets are found in a group apart. Some children are grouped in the middle of the space to represent the field, and a third band formed of adults will act as birds.

When everything is ready, the last group begins to move, and they approach making motions as if flying and making a peculiar noise, imitating the call of the jirijir. They fall on the group of children, that is, on the field. A new group, this time composed of women, intervene in the scene to frighten the birds with yells and noisy clapping of hands. The birds try to escape as a flock, following the straight line of flight they are accustomed

[137 cont.]

536 to, always making their peculiar call. In this way they pass over
796 the place where the hammock men are in position; they are arranged two by two in a semicircle, hands held right in left, forming quadrilaterals. The birds reach this point running at the greatest speed possible, when the hammock men stop them by surrounding them to prevent their escape. They struggle, but in the end the semicircle begins to close until it becomes a circle, and the birds are imprisoned inside. An Indian then comes to kill the birds. He does so by taking them one by one by the arm as if this were the wing and by pretending to wring their necks. Once all the birds are taken out from the net the scene ends.

8. Jaguars and dogs. This theatrical game is intended to
[825] show the fortitude and courage of the jaguar and its superiority over dogs. For this reason it requires much care in the selection of the Indians who will take part in it because they must struggle fiercely with each other, and it is essential that the team that
[773] plays the part of jaguars be the conquerors. This has caused us to believe in the mythical value of the jaguar, which actually appears in their legends related to Mareiwa as well as in clan nomenclature. The game consists in engaging in a severe struggle in which the jaguar always manages to overcome the dogs and dominate them through being stronger. The complete description can be summed up thus: The group of jaguars pretends to be settled in a tree; sometimes they actually are. The group representing the dogs arrives, following the scent and the trail until they come to the foot of the tree [138] in which the jaguars are all lurking. On finding them, the dogs bark furiously beneath the tree and provoke the jaguars until they jump down, and it is then that the terrible struggle takes place. When in the end a dog falls to the ground, the jaguar pretends to bite it to pieces, clawing its breast open and attacking its throat, where he starts to devour it. The dog whimpers painfully, goes into convulsions, and stays motionless, as if dead. The jaguar gets up satisfied as he has triumphed, and so ends the play.

9. Dogs and peccaries. Two groups are formed, each one
[533] composed of ten men arranged in line and captained, as is customary, by a singer, who is the chief of the group. One group rep-
[526] resents the peccaries, the other the dogs which are going to hunt them.

[138 cont.]

536 The play starts when the peccaries gather in a group, pretending
796 by their position and their movements that they are inside the
526 cave which is their refuge. The chief of the dog group begins to sing while these gather round him, and he harangues them to go in and kill the peccaries and not let themselves be beaten by them. The group of peccaries answer threateningly and hasten to defend themselves. The dogs approach their prey cautiously and single out one from among the group. A struggle starts between a dog and one of the peccaries, both fighting desperately for mastery, each player striving to grab his adversary by his loincloth to lift him in the air and throw him to the ground. The struggle is fierce and stubborn, because they usually select the most hardened fighters and well-muscled men to represent both the peccaries and the dogs. It continues until one of the combatants is floored by the other, in which case he admits defeat. The winner's group marks up one point. When the first pair have finished their match, a new one is started between two other Indians, and so on successively until all the representatives of the two groups have participated. In the development of the personal struggles between dog and peccary, each singer incites his man, exhorts him to greater efforts, etc. Finally, they add up the score of points obtained by each group, and the winner receives a prize, consisting generally of food.

10. The fox and the rabbit. Three personages take part in this act: one who acts as a fox, one as a rabbit, and a child who has the role of a watermelon [patilla]. The game consists in seeing which of the two animals, the fox or the rabbit, will get the watermelon they are fighting for. Both of them want to steal it. So each one of them seizes the child (who is twelve or thirteen years old) by an arm, and he who can pull him away from the other is considered the winner. [139]

To better understand this play, it is well to state that while in La Guajira we collected a story about the fox and the rabbit which is published in Revista de Folklore (67) in which there is also

67. Pineda Giraldo, Roberto. "La Chama, un mito guajiro" [The Chama, a Guajiro Myth],

526 [139 cont.]
536 shown a test of cunning between these two animals. In this tale,
796 the rabbit is the winner.

11. The man and the wild boar. One man takes the part of a wild boar, the other that of the man who stalks it. The hunter follows the boar, which runs swiftly away, dodging the hunter's arrows in its flight. In this trial of dexterity, the hunter will be the winner if in the end he wounds the boar with one of the arrows he shoots; or it will be the boar that triumphs if it is able to tire out its persecutor and dodge all the arrows shot at it.

12. The hunter, the dog, and the rabbit. This play is another trial of dexterity, as the end in view is to try the ability of each actor in the role assigned to him. It represents, in short, a hunting party, in which the man and the dog try to capture and kill the rabbit. The dog tries to catch it and tear it to pieces, while the man follows at a greater distance, throwing stones at it. If he manages to hit it, the rabbit acts as if killed, giving the victory to the huntsman. The result is the same if the dog is successful in catching his prey with his claws, but if the rabbit should evade both of them, showing greater ability and speed than the other two, he becomes the winner of the test.

536 13. The song of the serpent. We have left this section to
796 terminate our study of the theater in La Guajira because it presents characteristics different from all the other representations which we have described. It does not involve a demonstration of skill or force, nor does it require the intervention of contending groups in any way. In consequence there is no dialogue, but
533 there is a monologue sung by the leader of the group followed by all the actors, in which the deeds of the serpent are recounted

As a clarifying note we refer our reader to the chapter "Sickness and Medicine," in which this reptile's magic power is clearly evident, especially in relation to pregnant women and all that surrounds them. We also would recall that, as in the case of
614 the jaguar, the serpent [140] figures in the naming of the clans, at times in close association with the jaguar.

The act develops as follows: A line is formed of alternate men and women who take each other's hands. They run with short steps, undulating to copy the motion of a serpent when

536 [140 cont.]
moving along the ground. Headed by their leader they all continue to sing the song of the serpent, saying more or less the following: "I am the snake. I drag myself along the ground. [539] I do harm to no one. But he who dares to step on me because I am on the ground gets his punishment. I bite him and wound him. At times I kill him. He has to stay in bed and suffer for a long time as a punishment for having trodden on me and for thinking that I am helpless because I drag myself along the ground...." This song is repeated several times. [141]

IX

Mareiwa and Wanurú

or

Notions of Good and Evil

Through all the preceding chapters we have tried to explain clearly what constitutes the magic life of the Guajiro, which is almost the same as saying his spiritual life, and in passing we have mentioned the presence and activities of beings with higher powers than ordinary mortals, able to do good or evil according to which being intervenes in each particular case. We have thus touched on two fundamental ideas: good and evil.

Our interest is now concentrated in trying to elucidate the quality of these spirits, or supernatural beings. These can be very seriously confused owing particularly to the influence of acculturation and more specifically to the pressure exerted by missionaries in their proseletyzing function. So great is the misapplication of terms and concepts in this world of ideas that we might call the religious, that even the Guajiro mythology has been transformed by the use of terms which have a pejorative and degrading effect on the Guajiro people (68).

68. This statement is based on the legend which we obtained orally from

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A chichamaya *in full swing*

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First burial. The dead person's bier is being carried out from its shelter

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764

The after-burial. A medicine man guarding the urns containing the dead person's bones

[Facing p. 96]

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the first wife retains a privileged position. She will be of the best family and the highest in rank. She is the hostess.

One day, when I was standing talking with Mauana, he pointed to a couple walking past and said eagerly:

'You should picture those with your apparatus.'

I photographed the two, who to me appeared very ordinary. The woman had her cheeks and nose painted red. Mauana whispered to me that the woman was not a woman, but that they were two men living together. Later we came across several Indian men who did women's work and wore women's dress. This was not considered really right, but it was looked upon with indulgence. In the early days of discovery gold coins were found on the coast by Santa Marta which depicted 'shameful acts contrary to Nature'. Among the Guajiros' relatives in the West Indies there were chiefs who had whole harems of boys.

'We were talking of bride-price and buying women slaves,' said I, to revert to more normal things. 'What does a poor youth do, who possesses nothing?'

Everyone agreed that it was a pity about any such. The law had definite regulations for intercourse between man and woman, and any infringement involved a claim for damages. If anyone seduced a woman, he must pay considerable compensation to her relatives, however willing she may have been; but if he took her against her will, it costs him considerably more. A poor man cannot pay and therefore risks losing his life as a punishment. The Indians admitted that here and there on the border there was prostitution, but it was mostly mestizo women who lent themselves to that. In Guajira proper, there were no prostitutes. Both the chiefs and the monks told us that. Thus in the interior, a young man without means must live a life of abstinence. The time when the dances of the kid were performed would be his only opportunity of enjoying a woman's favours, provided he could find a willing partner. At this time the otherwise strict code is suspended and free love permitted.

Mauana had promised to arrange a dance, but of another kind. The dances of the kid are performed during the rainy

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season, and it was then the dry season. The dance was the so-called chichimaya. This was arranged because Mauana had dreamed that he ought to spend several cattle and lots of maize beer on a performance of this kind. Otherwise dances are arranged in connection with a girl's being confined in her hut and on a number of other similar occasions. The medicine man, piache, often orders a dance when someone has fallen ill, when a casimba has run dry or when they want rain. They also dance when the herds are marked and castrated. Neighbours and relatives are invited to bring their young girls and these need never lack for partners, for the young men come of themselves, when they hear of it. It is not impolite to ask about the refreshments to be provided before accepting an invitation. The Indians prefer beef to goat's meat, and a beef-dance will be very well attended.

We reached Mauana's house a little too early. The maize beer was not quite ready. Maize beer, or chicha as it is now generally called by the Creoles, is simply a gruel made of ground maize, and it constitutes the Indians' daily fare, as it does in much of native South America. If this gruel is allowed to ferment, it becomes slightly alcoholic and the Guajiro then call it *ujor*. Fermentation is traditionally stimulated by the women chewing the maize, and this also is done in Guajira. The maize is sometimes mixed with manioc. The resultant brew, *ishiruna*, the Indians consider pleasant and strengthening. The ordinary, slightly sour unchewed maize gruel appeals more to the European both as regards taste and hygiene.

Mauana had intended to regale us with spirits, but fortunately we managed to persuade him to give ordinary maize gruel instead.

Gradually people began to assemble, all in their finery. Mauana explained that it was only a small performance. He really did not have time for such things just then, but the promptings of dreams had to be followed.

In the dusk we all went down to the feast-place outside a couple of huts, where an area had been well swept. Round this the guests had now begun to assemble. They stood in a

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great ring and several of them were wiping their mouths in evident satisfaction—presumably having just been regaled with some drink.

The drum thundered a long time in vain before a young Indian stepped into the ring, removed his cloak and sandals and began to walk round in a circle—a challenge to the members of the fair sex.

Almost at once a girl appeared in the ring; removed her sandals and held her tunic spread wide with her hands. The two then began dancing: he in front, she a few yards behind. Suddenly the man gave a shout and the tempo increased. Turning swiftly the girl came sweeping down towards the man who danced away, moving backwards. She must try to get close enough to tramp on his feet and make him fall, but she must not barge him. If she managed to make her partner fall, there was great jubilation, and then a new couple took the stage. Otherwise, the girl would probably challenge her partner to a few more turns, while he answered contemptuously:

'Fetch your little sister.' (Inferring that she would manage better.)

In this way a dance continues without interruption, couple following couple. It could go on for weeks.

The well-bred Indian considers the chichamaya the only suitable dance. The monks also approved of it, since it was perfectly decent, the two dancers remaining apart the whole time. The dance is not genuinely Indian, containing both Spanish and African features, but even in its present form it retains its religious-magical significance and is part of the ritual used in certain family ceremonies and on other important occasions.

The dance of the kid is a pure folk dance. It is really a whole complex of games, dances and typical fertility rites. The good families do not allow their daughters to attend them. The law's strict sexual prohibition does not apply to those taking part in the dance of the kid, who enjoy an otherwise forbidden erotic licence. This is not approved of by the well-to-do, who still hold by the rule that a bride should be a virgin, since it can have an effect on the bride-price.

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price. Thus the well-to-do send slaves or servants to the dances.

These dances also have a practical significance. They take place at the start of the rains when vegetation shoots up and help is needed in keeping weeds under. Those taking part in the dance must weed their host's ground during the day, as a return for their food and the dancing at night. They have to do something during the feast which lasts for weeks at a time. Naturally holding such a dance-feast is a costly business, but as a compensation the giver has work done for him. Therefore the feast moves from rancho to rancho, while there is work to be done.

Actually all the dancers ought to be at home working during this time, for all plantations will become overgrown if they are neglected, but the young people are tempted by the feast, the dancing and love-making, and the opportunity to get free of the bonds of strict convention for a time. The fertility of the crops is promoted by different erotic performances, although the Indians no longer seem fully aware that this is their significance. These are typical magical fertility rites.

The actual dance of the kid is performed in different ways. Sometimes the couples are in lines one behind the other, the men holding the girl in front round the waist. First they all dance forwards, and then they turn. At each turn they change partners, the men singing: 'Lend me your partner for my travelling companion.' Another way of performing the dance is very like a long-dance in Sweden. Each group of dancers is led by a singer who always improvises his song, so that the words are always new.

The dance begins at sunset and continues for several hours, after which the dancers all make off into the darkness, two by two, and spend the night with each other. Usually a couple will stick together throughout the feast. Intercourse must be of the girl's own free will, but involves the man in no obligations, neither compensation for her lost virginity nor damages if a child should result. This is recognized by the girl's family, because it is a result of the freedom allowed during the dance of the kid. If, after the feast, a man wishes

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796 786 to marry his partner, he must pay for her in the normal way. Otherwise the young men and girls just give each other mementoes.

One of the games forming part of the dance of the kid is the so-called virginity test. The girls gather round a singer who improvises a variation of the theme: 'Let us see, pretty maid, if you have kept your innocence, if any man's hands have touched your body.' He then runs his hands over each girl in turn from the tip of her big toe, over her leg, knee, crotch, belly, chest and neck to the crown of her head, all the while trying to tickle her. Whoever neither laughs nor moves is declared a virgin and lauded by the singer. She goes and stands on one side, while those who cannot keep from laughing and so are not virgins, go to the other. Afterwards pretence presents are given to the 'virgins'.

796 842 524 When young people are gathered together as during the dance of the kid festival, all sorts of dance-games and pantomimes are performed. Some are connected with fertility rites, as those imitating the mating-play of turtles and goats. In the latter, the girl 'goats' are enclosed in a ring of men who try to prevent the male 'goats' from getting inside it. If any of the youths manage to leap in, they behave exactly like billy goats, pursuing the 'nannies', nosing at them and pretending to mount them. A number of the games have no erotic connection, but refer to all sorts of events in the lives of men and animals. Animals are imitated most faithfully.

796 524 One of the games depicts a meeting between the lowlanders and highlanders of Guajira. Each of the two sides has a singing leader. They exchange greetings and then each describes the situation in their homes: in the one plenty of rain, good harvests, plenty to eat and fat cattle; in the other drought, starvation and misery.

Those who are lucky with their climate then invite the others to their territory, and they all dance off in the same direction. The game is a reference to the fact that the lowlanders have the right against payment to send their herds to upper Guajira at certain times of the year to graze.

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In another game the dangerous spirit Yoruyá attacks and kills Indian after Indian till he is set upon by them all and killed; in yet another the Indians hide in a cloud made of cloaks, when the spirit forces its way in, but it is captured by the cloud and vanquished.

Horse-racing is one of the Indians' greatest pleasures at their festivities, but they also indulge in it—without horses—as a game in connection with the dances. Very amusing and picturesque is a game in which they imitate hunting a kind of bird that plunders the seed in their fields. The Indians pretend to be trying to scare them and catch them in nets. Here the seed is represented by some children, some of the men are the birds, others the hunters who catch the birds in their hammocks and then wring their necks!

Another game represents a fight between jaguars and dogs. The strongest of the men are made the jaguars, for these have to win. Then there is a snake game in which men and women crawl along together, imitating the movements of a snake and singing the snake song: 'I am the snake. I creep along the ground. I do harm to none, but punish those who try to trample me. Long must he suffer, who tramps upon me because he thinks me defenceless since I creep on the ground. He must suffer and die.' There are endless variations; but a dance lasts so long that a little variety is necessary.

Once the upper-class dance, the chichamaya, was over, Mauana's people gladly showed us all their games and dances even though it was not the right time of year.

As we were riding home the next day we encountered several companies of Indians returning from a burial-feast. Among them was a young man in a beautifully woven mantle, who joined up with us. He spoke good Spanish and obviously belonged to the upper class. Francisco told him about us, and he was eager that we should be his guests that same day, since his rancho lay on our route. He said that he had a few things that I might well find interesting and he himself would like to see one of my pistols. (Francisco had evidently described how they smoked and made a bang.) Some of the Indians accompanying us now became